

## Text for announcement of Corona Round Table on website

### **SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19: science in the spotlight An online public Round Table**

**Tuesday 6 Oct. 2020, 13:30 – 17:30 CEST**

The current pandemic and the socioeconomic measures to control it have created a lot of controversy. Governments claim that their control measures are based on science. Scientists are indeed making progress in understanding the pandemic and the virus – yet to date there is virtually no aspect of it about which science has been able to provide certainty.

In this Round Table, ENSSER will discuss the SARS-CoV-2 virus and the COVID-19 pandemic with a panel of three experts. They will provide their insights from their own field of knowledge, after which they will engage in discussion with each other and with the audience.

#### **Speakers:**

**Dr. Michael Antoniou (molecular geneticist, King's College London School of Medicine):**

"SARS-CoV-2: natural original or laboratory creation? Does it matter?"

Evidence will be presented for either a natural animal to human transmission or laboratory manipulation and escape for the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Discussion as to whether it matters or not to know the origin of SARS-CoV-2 will also be presented.

**Prof. Ignacio Chapela (microbial ecologist and mycologist, University of California, Berkeley):**

"Agnotology in Covid: A Historical Event, Orphaned of the Scientific Regard"

The Covid situation reveals many aspects of how we relate to the natural world in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This is particularly poignant for the sciences. In this presentation, Ignacio Chapela will address questions such as: What scientific discipline is relevant to address the Covid situation? What scientific information has been overlooked? Which alternatives have been left unexplored to produce a socially- and environmentally-responsible outcome from this challenge? Interdisciplinarity, context-sensitive science and a socially-committed practice of science can enlighten useful avenues in the current situation and the many other similar ones to come. A finer analysis of the situation will be offered from the perspective of the microbial ecologist/evolutionary biologist.

**Prof. Giuseppe Longo (mathematician and epistemologist, CNRS-Ens, Paris):**

"Organisms and ecosystems like machines: some consequences of the mechanistic bias on nature"

Organisms are programmable machines and ecosystems are reservoirs of and for those machines. This mechanistic view of nature serves as the bottom line of knowledge, leading us to think we can safely manipulate any organism (plants, viruses) and drive it into the ecosystem. This kind of science has degenerated to computational algorithms imposed on man and nature. Alternative scientific views are needed, and above all a precautionary principle for science, to move us away from this.

#### **Programme:**

13:30 – 15:30 CEST: presentations by each of the speakers

16:00 – 17:30 CEST: Round Table discussion between speakers and audience

#### **Moderator:**

**Dr. Angelika Hilbeck (agricultural ecologist, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology)**

#### **Registration:**

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_QBbISpNuTcS7jCGwpW-8aw](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_QBbISpNuTcS7jCGwpW-8aw)

Participants are invited to enter into oral discussion with the speakers or to submit written questions during the event. Participants entering the discussion or asking questions will be requested to state their name and affiliation. **By registering for the event, participants give their permission to publish their names, remarks and their video image online.**

The zoom webinar will also be recorded.

The invitation may also be viewed online at <https://ensser.org/events/2020/zoom-corona-round-table-sars-cov-2-and-covid-19-science-in-the-spotlight/>.